

Ellsworth Industrial Park

Re: Downers Grove Area Groundwater Investigation

**Fact Sheet #4
December 2001**

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



489229

Downers Grove, Illinois

Background

Illinois EPA collected more than 500 samples from private wells in unincorporated areas of Downers Grove beginning in July 2001 and ending in January 2002. Results of those tests revealed contamination in the area groundwater by industrial solvents used as degreasers and cleaners - trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE) - at levels greater than the federal Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) established as safe levels for all users of public drinking water supplies.

Both Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA have been actively investigating since last fall the source of the contamination in the groundwater. Illinois EPA made door-to-door interviews and inspections of businesses located in or near the Ellsworth Industrial Park. Both Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA mailed requests for information to businesses that have used solvents for their processes, and U.S. EPA obtained access to private property in the industrial park. Recently, during the Phase II investigation work, Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA completed installation of 42 monitoring wells for groundwater evaluation within the Ellsworth Industrial Park, collected approximately 150 soil samples and 80 groundwater samples.

What is the status of the investigation to find the source of the TCE and PCE contamination in the area groundwater (in and around Downers Grove)?

U.S. EPA and Illinois EPA have completed the source area investigation and have narrowed the scope of the investigation to a number of areas of contamination that are thought to contribute to the groundwater contamination. The focus of this second phase of the investigation has been primarily in and near the Ellsworth Industrial Park (see attached map). Information gathered during the investigation will be reviewed for enforcement purposes.

Illinois EPA has placed in the Public Information Repository (Downers Grove Public Library) a Parson's Engineering report, dated April 4, 2002, describing the results of the private well testing in the area and fact sheets about the investigation. U.S. EPA has placed a "Preliminary Groundwater Investigation Report" in the repository as well as a number of information items. U.S. EPA also expects to have a report on the Phase II source investigation work to place in the library by late August.

Will there be a public meeting to answer questions about the source area investigation?

Yes. Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA will host Public Availability Sessions, similar to those held last fall, on September 4th at the Downers Grove Village Hall at 801 Burlington Ave. Illinois EPA will mail a flyer to the site contact list in mid-August with details about the availability sessions.

Will there be any more testing of private wells in the area by either agency?

On July 17th, Illinois EPA performed sampling of 13 private wells in unincorporated Downers Grove that were previously tested. This limited sampling is to determine whether the contamination has changed in the past seven to eleven months.

Because Illinois EPA has characterized (to the extent that private wells are available in the downgradient path of the plume) the groundwater contamination in the Downers Grove study area, Illinois EPA plans no further routine testing of private wells (except for minimal follow-up sampling to examine how the plume is changing over time). Illinois EPA is now referring all requests for private well testing to DuPage County Health Department, Les Bant, 111 North County Farm Road in Wheaton, IL 60187, phone 630-682-7979, extension 7177.

How is responsibility for sampling private wells shared between the Illinois EPA and the Illinois Department of Public Health?

There is a new protocol in place (April 12, 2002) for notification and actions by state agencies in response to groundwater contamination that may affect private water supplies, the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Groundwater's "Contamination, Response Strategic Plan" (available for review at the Downers Grove Public Library). This plan clearly defines individual agency roles and responsibilities in the event of contamination of private water wells. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois EPA will jointly evaluate each contaminated community and non-community water supply, identify potentially impacted private wells, and identify an appropriate response that may include sampling in each area for Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs):

If the project is related to delineating the "rate and extent" of a groundwater contamination plume, the Illinois EPA will take a lead role in leadership with local



Source Area Investigation for Downers Grove Groundwater Contamination

Prepared by Illinois EPA July 2002